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Davies, Randall

Less eminent Victorians

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LESS EMINENT VICTORIANS.

LESS EMINENT VICTORIANS.

BY

R. D.

AUTHOR OF "A LYTTEL BOOKE OF NONSENSE," ETC.

LONDON:

PETER DAVIES, 30 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.

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NOTE.

THE woodcuts here reproduced are from "The Leisure Hour," "The Quiver," and other Victorian periodicals; and also from a book called "Mary Price: the Memoirs of a Servant Maid." One or two of them have been selected purely for their badness; but for the most part it is their very excellence as artistic and dramatic illustration that tempts one to exploit their Victorian habit and gesture for less serious purposes than those for which they were designed.

R. D.

Chelsea, 1927.

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I.

THERE was a young Lady of Bude
Who was horribly bored by a dude,
    Till she gave him a hint
    That was plainer than print—
And a desperate silence ensued.

II.

THERE was a young Girl of Montrose
Who declared if you powdered your nose
That the men would all think
That you'd taken to drink
And would certainly never propose.

III.

THERE was a young Lady of Brest
Who was horribly bored by a guest.
The broadest of hints
Couldn't lure him from prints,
And she hated the ones he liked best.

IV.

THERE was a young Lady of Lartington
Who called on the Marquis of H———n.
She said, "You are wrong
"To abuse my chignon—
"And tell me, now, how is my parting done?"

v.

THERE was an old Lady of Perth
Who had been an abstainer from birth
    Till they gave her some punch
    At the Advocates' Lunch,
When she soon became blind to the earth.

VI.

THERE was a young Lady of Dover
Who started to read Casanova.
She hadn't got far
When she told her papa
That she felt she was blushing all over.

VII.

THERE was an old Fellow of Shere,
Who was standing a little too near,
When his tiresome daughter
Who wouldn't drink water
Was opening a bottle of beer.

VIII.

THERE was a young Man of Cowlairs
Who didn't have family prayers:
But he'd read them a sermon
In French or in German,
Or bits about foreign affairs.

IX.

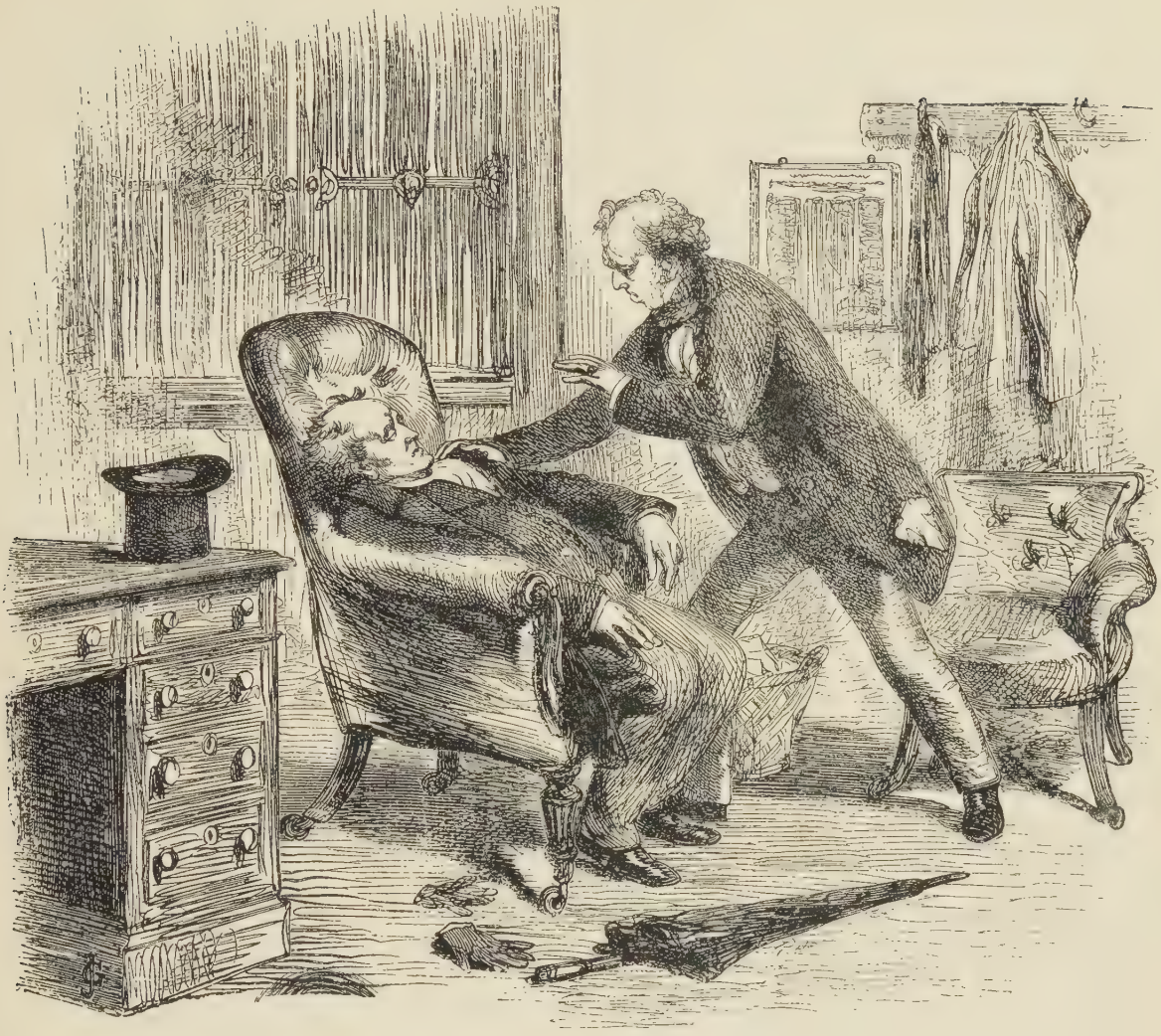
THERE was a young Lady of Hurst
Who hoped that her heart wouldn't burst:
The unfortunate girl
Was in love with an Earl,
And her mother suspected the worst.

X.

THERE was an old Fellow of Colwick
Who thought he'd indulge in a frolic:
He went to a ball,
But had no fun at all,
As his gloves had been cleaned with carbolic.

XI.

THERE was a young Fellow of Ryde
Who was terribly shocked at his bride.
She said she was reading
A book on "Good Breeding"—
Which proved to be really "Bell's Guide."



XII.

There was an old Man of St. Bees
Who mesmerised both his trustees.
With poor Cousin Bob
He had rather a job,
But the banker he managed with ease.

XIII.

THERE was a young Fellow of Croy
Who was really no more than a boy,
But was terribly hurt
When he wanted to flirt
And was solemnly offered a toy.

XIV.

THERE was a young Woman of thirty
Whose husband was filthily dirty;
When once on a trip
She suggested a dip,
He was nearly inclined to be shirty.

XV.

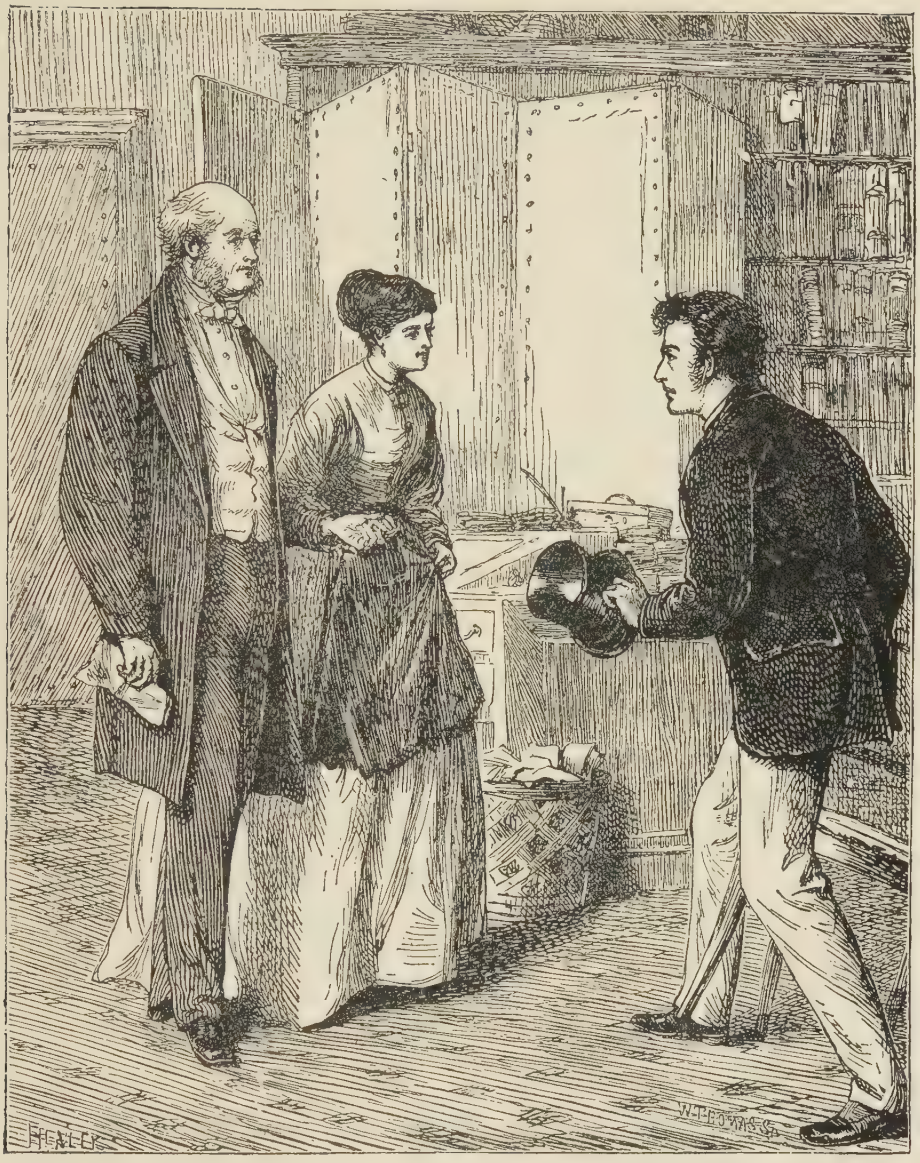
THERE was a young Lady of Cordova
Who didn't care what people thought of her.
Even in the Prado
She'd flirt with bravado,
And that was the long and the short of her.

XVI.

THERE was a young Lady of Hook
Who had written a wonderful book,
But her mother said, "Nelly,
"That won't fill your belly—
"You'd much better learn how to cook."

XVII.

THERE was a young Lady of Lee
Who imagined she'd swallowed a bee.
When asked, "Does it buzz?"
She replied, "Yes, it does—
"Or perhaps it's the Camomile Tea."



XVIII.

THERE was an old Fellow of Brill
Who intended to alter his will,
But when just in the act
Became suddenly cracked,
And determined to dance a quadrille.

XIX.

THERE was an old Lady of Ditton
Who'd "lost an adorable kitten:
"As Providence willed it,
"Some dog must have killed it—
"Its tail had been terribly bitten."

XX.

THERE was an old Man of the Crouch
(For the truth of his tale we can vouch):
He was told by his wife
That she'd left him for life—
And he found her asleep on the couch!

XXI.

THERE was an old Man of Stogumber:
The telephone roused him from slumber.
They heard what he said
On his way back to bed;
It was something about a wrong number.

XXII.

THERE was a young Man of Spithead
Who believed his wife's mother was dead.
When she came for a visit
He shouted, "What is it?"
And incomprehensibly fled.

XXIII.

THERE was an old Person of Trunch
Whose jokes had been printed in *Punch*,
But the terrible strain
Had affected his brain,
And he often refused any lunch.

XXIV.

There was an old Person of Wensley
Whose family bored him intensely.
He had to resort
To a bottle of port,
Which appeared to relieve him immensely.

XXV.

THERE was a young Lady of Glynde
Who had a most innocent mind;
And she frequently maddened
The people who hadn't,
By "mentioning things of that kind."

XXVI.

THERE was a young Lady of Diss
Whom the Curate attempted to kiss;
If he only *had* kissed her
(She said to her sister)
She wouldn't have felt it like this.

XXVII.

THERE was an old Person of Wells
Whose daughters were both of them belles,
And though very demure
With Pa taking the cure
They attracted a couple of Swells.

XXVIII.

THERE was a young Fellow of Crawley
Whose wife was descended from Raleigh.
He said, "You know, doctor,
"You really quite shocked her
"By saying you thought she looked 'porly.'"

XXIX.

THERE was a young Lady of Brigg,
Whose heart was a great deal too big,
An inveterate flirt—
But she got her desert,
For she married a *terrible* prig.

XXX.

THERE was a young lady of Stow
Who had several strings to her bow,
Till the Baronet wrote
Such a nice little note
That she hadn't the heart to say no.

XXXI.

THERE was a young Lady of Ince,
Who was horribly bored by a Prince,
Though his love was sincere,
And he'd thousands a year,
And she knew she was foolish to wince.

XXXII.

THERE was a young Fellow of Ryde
Who had really no family pride;
And the housekeeper's niece,
By the merest caprice,
Was the lady he chose for his bride.

XXXIII.

THERE was a young Lady of Hawes
Whose friend had returned from the wars.
When he asked for a kiss
With a visage like this,
There was quite a perceptible pause.

XXXIV.

THERE was a young Woman of Cerney
Who went to consult an attorney.
She said she must fly
From her husband or die,
So he wished her a prosperous journey.

XXXV.

THERE was a young Woman of Hessle
Whose husband commanded a vessel.
The terrible strain
Had affected his brain,
And he wanted to teach her to wrestle.

XXXVI.

THERE was an old Person of Stobs
Who had little respect for the Nobs.
He especially hated
The newly created
And called them all parvenu snobs.

XXXVII.

THERE was a young Man at a Crammer
Who did very well in Greek Grammar.
But they bet him a fiver
He'd fail in his *viva*—
He'd such an unfortunate stammer.

XXXVIII.

THERE was a young Lady of Brean
Who used to play "God Save the Queen"
Till the drawing-room rang
With a tremulous twang
That was worse than the sewing machine.

XL.

THERE was a young Lady of Smethwick
Whose lover was growing æsthetic.
She said to him, "Bill,
"You are looking quite ill,
"I think you should try an emetic."

XLI.

THERE was an old Lady of Ryde
Who refused to meet Algernon's bride.
When he brought her to call
She remained in the hall
And desired him to take her outside.

XLII.

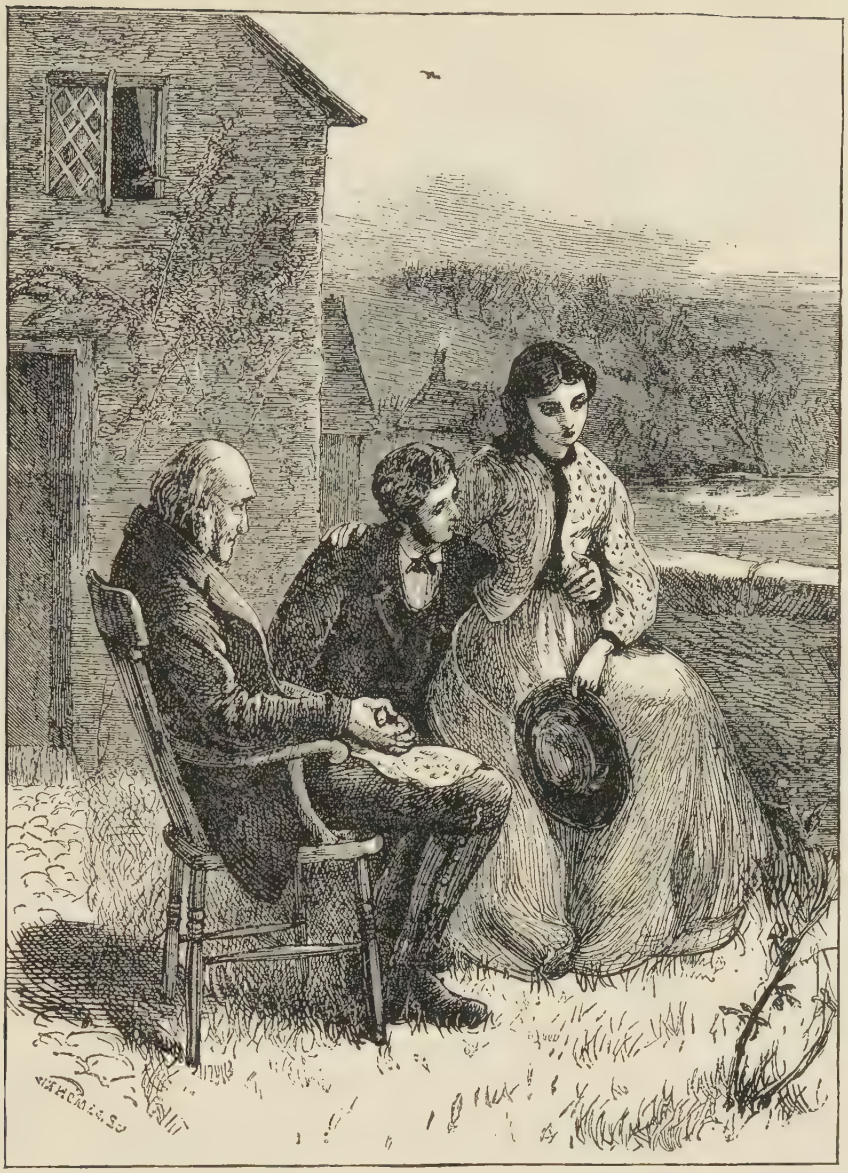
THERE was a young Lady of Lee
Who was quite a success as M.D.
She was much in request
By the richest and best,
And she charged a proportionate fee.

XLIII.

THERE was a young Fellow of Gort
Whose legs were a trifle too short,
And to make things complete
(Not from fear of cold feet)
They required a little support.

XLIV.

There was a young Lady of Ongar
Who said, "If skirts get any longer,
"I'll really regret
"My divine crinolette,
"And I'll have to grow taller and stronger."



XLV.

THERE was a young Lady of Pyle
Who was wondering—"Was it worth while?"
Her prospective "in-laws"
Were such terrible bores,
And she'd never known Algernon smile.

XLVI.

THERE was a young Woman of Lancing
Who was summoned for furious dancing;
The Constable said
She was weak in the head:
But the Magistrate found it entrancing.

XLVII.

There was a young Woman of Heck
Who was offered a very big cheque.
But she said, "There's a rumour
"It may be a stumer,"
And ordered a large *triple-sec.*

XLVIII.

THERE was an old Lady of Maine
Who stayed with a Duke in Park Lane,
But she made such a fuss
Over catching the 'bus
That she never got asked there again.

XLIX.

There was an old Person of Jena,
Whose wife was a total abstainer.
He didn't complain,
Till she hid the champagne,
When he jolly well threatened to brain her.

L.

THERE was a young Man of Clancarty
Who went to a musical party.
When asked what he'd sing,
He replied, "Not a thing,
"But my appetite's wonderfully hearty."

LI.

THERE was a young Lady of Seamer
Who went for a trip on a steamer;
They put her ashore
When they got to the Nore,
For behaviour that didn't beseem her

LII.

THERE was a young Man of Moldavia
Who started a school for behaviour.
By the newly created
He soon became fêted,
And opened a branch in Belgravia.

LIII.

THERE was a young Woman of Herting
Who thought she heard Archibald flirting.
To make matters worse
It was Ada (the nurse),
Which was certainly most disconcerting.

LIV.

THERE was a young Lady of Gort
Who said, "Nothing is duller than port;
"If they'd only drink whiskey
"And get a bit frisky,
"There might be a chance of some sport."

LV.

THERE was a young Girl of Dolforgan
Whose aunt was a frightful old Gorgon,
Who even objected
To men so respected
As Ruskin and William de Morgan.

LVI.

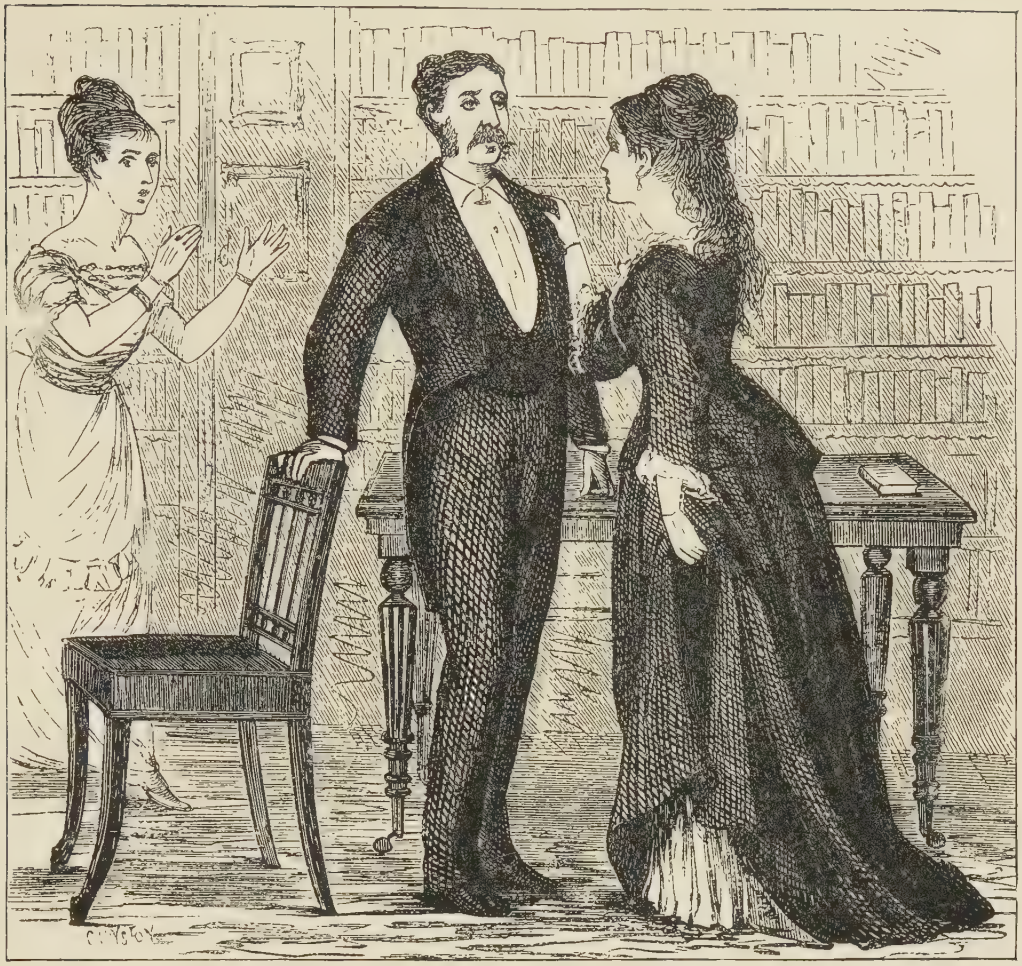
THERE was a young Lady of Bicester
Who fainted if anyone kissed her;
But nevertheless
She was bound to confess
She was only a passive resister.

LVII.

THERE was a young Man of Neen Sollars,
Who couldn't afford to wear collars.
His exquisite tact
In explaining the fact
Quite vanquished the girl with the dollars.

LVIII.

THERE was an old Lady of Lee
Who refused to drink H————n's tea.
But they said she was dotty
To drink M————ee,
And urged her to try A.B.C.



LIX.

THERE was a young Fellow of Bray
Who could never keep women away.
When alone in his sanctum
He'd really have thanked 'em
To run away somewhere and play.

LX.

THERE was a young Lady of Byker
Who wondered why men didn't like her.
It might have been due
To a wrong point of view,
Though probably that didn't strike her.